

**ISSN** INTERNATIONAL  
STANDARD  
SERIAL  
NUMBER  
**ISSN-2321-7065**

**IJELLH**

**International Journal of English Language,  
Literature in Humanities**

Indexed, Peer Reviewed (Refereed), UGC Approved Journal



**Volume 7, Issue 2, February 2019**

[www.ijellh.com](http://www.ijellh.com)

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### Deconstruction of Self and Deterioration of Intimacy in Philip Roth's Goodbye, Columbus

**Abstract:** This research paper entitled “Deconstruction of Self and Deterioration of Intimacy in Philip Roth's Goodbye, Columbus” presents psychoanalytical evaluation of Philip Roth's Novella Goodbye, Columbus” imbibing Derrida's deconstruction from the psychoanalytical perspective. Derrida argued that meaning of a text is unstable and undecidable which is also the case in the oral discourse of relationships, and their meaning can only be discovered through interpretation of hidden meanings between the lines or discourse. Although Derrida is a post-structuralist critic, doesn't he best represents the psychoanalytical interpretation of oral discourse through his theory of deconstruction where the meaning of the oral discourse is hidden and ambiguous causing deconstruction of the listener's psychology? The meaning of such discourses has to be interpreted by other characters of the fiction, based on their own psychology, attitude and state of mind causing deconstruction of self. The deconstructed psychology causes the self to behave awkwardly further causing deterioration of intimacies among the fictional as well as real life characters. This deconstructive interpretation causes deconstruction of psychological factors such as emotion, attitude and sentiments and raises several questions as: When meaning of an oral discourse varies from case to case, what makes it possible for a speaker to mean several things with one utterance? Do we need to bring back the intentions of the speaker in order to account for these differences? These questions need to

be answered from the psychoanalytical perspective taking into consideration of love/romantic relationship between the characters for better evaluation of the novella.

In *Goodbye Columbus* the protagonists Brenda and Neil faces the deconstruction of their self-psychology because of the hidden meanings of the oral discourse between them. According to Derrida logo centrism is the belief that speech and not writing is the central to language. Philip Roth in this novella should be commended for illustrating deconstruction of emotions, feelings and thoughts culminating into deterioration of intimacies in Jewish-American culture during the 1950s. The interpretation that one makes of other's oral discourse not only affects oneself but also people involved with too. The deconstructive emotion and emotional struggles that are encountered within oneself are often acted out with another. Regardless of whether somebody cherishes someone else or not they are continually going to be right in their own mind. Everyone has a completely different perspective in the relationship and they feel differently because the reason of what makes a good relationship may not be the same for everyone. So the relationship one has with another person is based on the deconstructive interpretation of what one thinks of him and vice-versa. Brenda, the female protagonist in the novella, is presented from the perspective of naive sentiment, dedicated lover but pleasure seeking, whereas Neil, the chief male protagonist is represented as lust ridden and puzzled character having low sentiment for others and having high desire for sex. The characterization demonstrates the difference between the sentiment and desire of both the characters. Misunderstanding, mistrust, ambivalent thoughts and expression, high degree of pleasure seeking and immature desire are the outcomes of their deconstructive psychology which is responsible for deterioration of their inter-personal relation culminating into break up. A relationship that is taken for granted, not worked at to some degree, or where either partner does not respect the other as a person, downplays and dismisses their needs, makes no attempt

at meaningful communication, and does not honour certain boundaries of behaviour will almost invariably wither and will start deteriorating and eventually die.

Keywords: Deconstruction, deterioration, inter-personal, intimacy, psychology, relationship, self

## Introduction

A literary creation does not come into existence by itself; its emergence is determined by social situations. The relation between literature and society is reciprocal. Of all the literary forms, the novel is considered to be the most socially-oriented because it depicts human relationships in its varied aspects. The novel may be considered a document of social criticism and it tends to reflect the contingent reality in an artistic fiction. The most critical and threatening problem of today's world, is maintaining a healthy human relationship. Fiction now a days is seriously concerned with the changing perceptions of man-woman relationship as the modern writers are highly involved in social reality. A meaningful and lasting relationship are incredibly complex, multi-faceted structures that are not built in a day and do not happen purely by accident. This problem persists worldwide and provokes the researchers to look into its reasons and solutions. According to a research report provided by "Eurostat" in 2018, 2.2 million marriages and 946 thousand divorces took place in the EU-28 in 2015; the marriage rate in the EU has declined from 7.8 per 1,000 persons in 1965 to 4.3 in 2015 where as the divorce rate increased from 0.8 per 1,000 persons in 1965 to 1.9 in 2015. Looking at this statistics, it's imperative to look deeply into the matter and identify problems and solutions. Fictional perspective has been used in this research for evaluation and analysis of the hypotheses, as literature is a reflection of the society that reflects its good values and ills. In its corrective function, literature mirrors the ills of the society with a view of making the society

realize its mistake and make the necessary amendments. Literature as an imitation of action often represents a picture of what people think, say and do in the society.

Derrida's deconstruction from psychoanalytical perspective is an important tool to analyse the importance of man-woman discourse in building and maintaining their relationship which is fundamental to the survival of the human race. Psychoanalysis has emerged as a valid tool of literary criticism and gained wide acceptability among the critical and intellectual circles as it is one of the applications of postmodernism. Indeed psychoanalysis and literature have always been viewed as two very closely related intellectual disciplines. Literature has actually provided a contiguous field of verification for psychoanalytical propositions. The thing which distinguishes psychoanalytic literary criticism from other approaches is that it usually takes into account those aspects of the works which have been thought as important by the conventional critics. Its practice of integrating these very complicated details into serious discourse has enabled it to come out with new interpretations of literary works.

Though men and women are part of the same species, they are not the same in everything. There are similarities between men and women, but there are differences as well. The insights provided by John Gray in *Men, Women and Relationships: Making Peace with the Opposite Sex* seems to be useful in understanding the nature of both man and woman:

Men generally assume that once a woman is fulfilled, she should stay that way. Once he has proven his love, she should know it forever, . . . From the male point of view, this attitude makes perfect sense. Women find this attitude hard to accept. It is just plain inconsistent with their internal reality. A woman needs to be reassured that she is special, worthy, understandable, and lovable. Men also need to be reassured, but they get that encouragement mainly through their work. Women, however, primarily need assurance through their relationships. (214)

In relationship of man and women; love, faith and mutual understanding are the basic pillars. The problem arises among these relationships when these pillars are shaken. Though the man-woman relationship in the modern context has undergone a great change there is a great barrier between these two genders. Focusing on gender issues makes one see how cultural norms concerning male and female roles affect the dynamics of interaction within both the sexes and how it does affect man-woman relationship especially the husband and wife relationship. By assigning differential roles to men and women, gender norms constrain both genders but in different ways, creating conflicting expectations and behaviours in men and women. Compared to a man, a woman suffers more as the former is in the status of dominating and consequently the latter is suppressed. Women have been normally socialized as caretakers and nurturers, and they have been granted more liberty to experience emotion. Thus, one common pattern for women in relationship with men is to focus on the intimacy to their own detriment as they are more emotionally pooled in the system. On the other hand, men who have been socialized to deny their needs for psychological intimacy and to focus excessively on achieving independence and self-sufficiency may tend to distance themselves emotionally in the relationship. In Philip Roth's novella *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), the protagonists Neil Klugman and Brenda Patimkin portrays human life actions, who by their words, action and reaction convey certain messages for the purpose of education, information and entertainment. So this novella will best represent the existing problem, reason and solution.

In the context of the changing world, it has become imperative to do away with separate domains for both, man and woman, and to redefine their relationship as equal and complementary. While *Goodbye, Columbus* brought Roth instant critical attention, winning the 1960 National Book Award and propelling his vocation, and keeping in mind that the group of analysis breaking down this work has become relentlessly throughout the years, it is very amazing that, deconstruction of self and disintegration of affections in the novella has stayed

unexplored. "Deconstruction" is the term coined by French thinker and scholar Derrida to understand the association among content and its significance during which he contended that importance of a given content is precarious. In a similar way when self is glanced from the lens of deconstruction, it too is not stable. The novella *Goodbye, Columbus* was published in 1959 which describes the construction and deconstruction of relationship between Jewish American and middle class librarian Neil Klugman and gentile upper class student Brenda Patimkin. Both of them beautifully built their intimate relations in the novel but it starts deteriorating because of the psychoanalytical factors. The present paper will evaluate and analyze the psychoanalytical factors that are responsible for the deconstruction of self and intimate relations in the novella.

Men and women are known for their own patterns of relationship and communication, it reveals that these patterns are not the result of individual pathology but are prescribed by powerful, long-standing norms. A man or a woman's failure to follow these norms is mainly responsible for the problems in the relationship between a man and a woman particularly in the relationship between partners. To formulate a more egalitarian view of both man and woman is needed very much for the sake of a good relationship between man and woman especially between partners in their marital life. It points out the direction for change, in which both men and women are free to experience the joys and responsibilities of intimacy and also to pursue fulfilment of their own goals independently. Most of the people in this world enter into a relationship spontaneously, without considering how and why we are really doing it, and more importantly, what we need from it. People are either driven by nature and instinct, for example the fundamental biological need to reproduce, or are led by their heart rather than their mind. The term 'deterioration of intimacies' is used by author Joseph A. DeVito in his book *Messages: Building Interpersonal Communication Skills* (1993) as fourth stage among six stages of relationship. According to DeVito the relation develops through six stages i.e. contact,



involvement, intimacy, deterioration, repair and dissolution. According to DeVito, when a couple comes into contact with each other they involve into each other's feelings and emotions and develops an intimacy, then after marriage or deep intimacy they realize the ground reality of family relationship and also the promises that they had made during involvement and intimacy stage and their relationship starts deteriorating. The repercussion of this deterioration can be either repair of the relationship or it ends in dissolution. Thus this stage is quite prominent and needs to be explored through this novella.

#### Deconstruction of Self-psychology causing Deterioration of Intimacy

Literally, the society characterizes women as ideally warm, gentle, dependent and submissive. Family life and the work patterns expose the idea that woman should be subordinate to man. Through the ages men have considered themselves as superior to women and thereby, establishing themselves as "Self" and women as the "Other." But this myth is proved to be false in this novella. Neil who is the narrator of the novella, is not only deconstructing his own psychology but his partner's Brenda as well. Every time his utterance gives puzzled meaning to Brenda which she takes differently. They contacted for the first time in a swimming pool of the Green Lane Country Club which in the words of Joseph A. DeVito called "Contact", the first stage of intimacy. In the swimming pool, Neil held Brenda's glasses as a momentary servant as he himself accepts this when he meets her the second time in the same swimming pool, "I held Brenda's glasses for her once again, this time not as a momentary servant but as afternoon guest; or perhaps as both, which still was an improvement"(13). After the first momentary meeting he tries to develop his relation further with Brenda by calling her over telephone and introducing himself as he was enchanted by her beauty, this involvement DeVito called "Involvement", the second stage of intimacy. During the telephonic discourse he introduced himself as "I'm...dark" (6). Brenda is a gentle girl who doesn't like Negros



although she has a Negro housemaid in her home, she assures herself by asking Neil, “Are you a Negro?”(7). The negative reply of Neil deconstructs the psychology of Brenda and she could not decide what does Neil looks like and she asked him again, “What do you like ?”(7), for Brenda look is more important to develop an intimate relation. Neil well understands this naive psychology of Brenda and hides his identity and pretends that he is not sure about how to make Brenda convince about his look in such a way that she gets impressed of his personality. So Neil decided to meet her personally and present himself in front of her and reaches in Tennis court where Brenda is playing with Laura Simpson. In the first meeting itself Neil doesn’t like Brenda’s discourse when She replies Neil’s question of Where does she go to school as “I go to school in Boston” (9), on which Neil remarks “I disliked her for the answer” (9). Although Neil is trying to build the relationship his inner psychology is not supporting him to do this as although he is angry on Brenda’s Boston remark, he appreciates her. Brenda too tries to develop this relationship as she is physically attracted to Neil by his look. Brenda although feels Neil being nasty to her from the beginning itself but her insight forces her to develop this relationship. Brenda’s psychology of building this relationship is clearly expressed by Roth in her expression “If I let you kiss me would you stop being nasty” (12). This open invitation to kiss her in the first meeting itself clearly indicates her erotic passion of adulthood which is lofted when Neil explains the kissing scene as “I felt her hand on the back of my neck and so I tugged her towards me, too violently perhaps....” (12). The relationship which started from kiss in the first meeting turned into game of lust in the second meeting in the same swimming pool where they play with each other where none other than Brenda invites Neil for the game inside the pool, “ ‘Come in,’ she said up to me, squinting. ‘We’ll play’” (13). Although it’s a sexual advancement of Brenda towards Neil but she never accept this and reproach Neil for this superfast advancement. Brenda is puzzled in herself. In her inner world of conscience she realized that there is something going on which is not correct, ““This is all very fast,’ she said”

(15), to which Neil responds gently, “Nothing has happened”. There is a bitter controversy in the psychology of both the characters where in one hand conscience of Brenda who is making all sexual advancements is making her feel that something is taking place which shouldn’t, on the other these activities and happenings are natural for Neil. He is quite sure that he is developing his intimacy with these activities which are dominated by Brenda, he expressed the same as, “you invited me, Brenda” (15), to which Brenda denies straight forwardly saying, “Why do you always sound a little nasty to me” (15). Neil doesn’t understand Brenda’s psychological attitude and tries to save himself, “Did I sound nasty? I don’t mean to. Truly” (15). The psyche of Neil is totally shattered because of such behavior of Brenda but to save this intimacy Neil expresses his grief, “I’m sorry” (15), as he is fully attracted by the physical beauty of Brenda. Neil is so blind in the lust of Brenda that he care nothing but Brenda, “... my aunt Gladys have twenty feedings every night, my father and mother could roast away their asthma down in the furnace of Arizona, those penniless deserters- I didn’t care for anything but Brenda” (15). At this stage Brenda realizes that it is the inherent attitude of Neil to be nasty all the time, “Stop apologizing. You’re so automatic about it, you don’t even mean it” (15). Neil feels himself insulted and expressed his aggression on Brenda in similar way as Brenda did, “ Now you’re being nasty to me” (16). Although both are blaming each other of being nasty but their relationship is repaired temporarily as Brenda takes initiative to say , “I like you...I like the way you look... I like your body, it’s fine” (16) to which Neil is although recovering from embracement, replied to Brenda rudely when she asked him, “You like mine (body), don’t you?” (16) to which Neil awkwardly replies “No”(16). When their relationship starts deteriorating from the second meeting itself, both of them tries to repair it. According to DeVito when relationships start deteriorating it either can be repaired or ends in dissolution. Neil too further tries to enhance his involvement with Brenda and asks her, “...you haven’t asked me anything about me” (16), to which Brenda asked his feeling and Neil expressed his

feeling “I want to swim” (16). This incident Neil regards as the absence of the expression of feeling, “Actually we did not have the feeling we said we had until we spoke them- at least I didn’t; to phrase them was to invent them and own them”(16). Here the meaning of their discourse is differing and deferring causing crack in their social psychology. Neil precedes his relationship with Brenda assuming that if they communicate their feeling and emotions, they won’t have the controversy in the future.

The relationship which is built on the foundation of look, physical attraction, lust and enchantment has catastrophic results. The conflict between the demands of the body and the spirit, rooted in the ascetic heritage of the twentieth century, lies at the heart of all discourse on love and sexuality. When the lust comes in between the relationship the “self” is deconstructed and the characters lose their self-control of emotion. At the point when couples are all of a sudden ready to perceive what lies underneath their secured standards of conduct it can stamp a defining moment in their relationship. In the opinion of Neil, Brenda is an egoist girl, in spite of that he manages to repair his relationship with her as can be seen as, “...the high wall of ego that rose, buttresses and all, between her and her knowledge of herself, we managed pretty well”(17).

Economic inequality also proves to be a reason of psychological deconstruction of the self in this novella. Neil always realizes this inequality since he visited Patimkin’s house for the first time on a dinner invitation by Brenda where he expresses his inner truth as,

It was a pleasure, except that eating among these brobdingnags, I felt for quite a while although four inches had been clipped from my shoulders, three inches from my height, and for good measure, someone had removed my ribs and my chest had settled meekly in towards my back. (19)

Neil feels himself shattered from inside because of this inequality although none has criticized him for his poorness. This inner struggle creates a psychological barrier for

maintaining a good intimacy with Brenda which can easily be seen in the latter part of the novel. The discourses got worst when they are interpreted differently, When Mr. Patimkin remarked Neil as, “He eats like a bird”(20), he feels himself low-esteemed and also is a matter of fun in Patimkin’s house when not only Mrs. Patimkin and even Brenda makes fun of his name calling him Bill as malapropism. Neither Neil nor Brenda has good relationships with their mother, in one hand where Neil lives with his aunt Gladys instead of with his own parents, whereas Brenda remarks her mother as jealous, “I can’t even think of her as my mother. She hates me” (22). The person who does not have good relationship with even mother, how can s/he has a charming relationships with other. How children are treated when they are brought up puts a deep impact on the formation of their social psychology. Brenda hates her mother because she feels that her mother gives more care to her sister Julie than her. The famous Psychologist John Carter in his book *Psychology of Relationships* states that involving into relationship can have the following needs:

Giving and receiving love/affection, curing loneliness, companionship, security, having children, sexual fulfillment, complying with pressure from society/parents/media, validation of self, power and control and personal growth.  
(141)

Thus to save and continue his intimacy with Brenda, Neil bears his inner frustration and insulting remarks of Mrs. Patimkin but he never reacts. He quarrels with his inner self and the outer world,

I didn’t intend to allow myself such unfaithful thoughts, to line up with Mrs. Patimkin while I sat beside Brenda, but I could not shake from my elephant’s brain that she-still-thinks-we-live-in-Newark remark. I did not speak, however, fearful that my tone would shatter our post-dinner ease and intimacy”.(23)

Every time Neil is hiding his emotion, he is not presenting himself as original, and he feels himself in a contradictory situation, his feelings and emotions are not interpreted correctly by Brenda. In one hand he thinks that he will not have any miscommunication with Brenda, which he thinks is the main cause of their deterioration of intimacy, on the other hand he hides his sentiments and emotion which further causes more drift in his mind. "I did not want to voice a word that would lift the cover and reveal that hideous emotion I always felt for her, and is the underside of love. It will not always stay the underside-but I am skipping ahead" (23).

In intimate relationship it's very important for each partner to respect the wordings of each other and so acts Neil, when Brenda expresses her commitment to see off her brother Ron to airport, Neil seems to respect her words in affirmative. This conversation best explains Neil's controversial and deconstructive commitment in this relationship:

'We'll be right back,' Brenda said to me. 'You have to sit with Julie. Carlota's off.'

'Okay,' I said.

'We're taking Ron to the airport.'

'Okay'.

'Julie doesn't want to go. She says Ron pushed her in the pool this afternoon. We've been waiting for you, so we don't miss Ron's plane. Okay?'

'Okay'.(GC 33)

In this conversation Neil successfully maintains a neutrality of expression and feeling towards the words of Brenda, but he couldn't resist his inner anger and ultimately replies very aggressively to the answer, when Brenda asked him about how he likes her as, "You're great to baby-sit for. Am I allowed to all the milk and cake I want?" (33). The gesture and body language of Neil could not be easily read by Brenda though she pacifies him saying, "Don't be angry, baby. We'll be right back"(33). This all misunderstanding took place because of misinterpretation of Brenda's words by Neil. This is what Derrida explained in his theory of

deconstruction that a language has no meaning or endless meaning. Furthermore when Brenda is asking about, "I meant how do you like me in a dress!"(33), but Neil interpreted her words as whether he loves her or not, a big misunderstanding and deconstruction of Neil's psychology.

In Patimkin's house Brenda and Neil makes love for the first time where both of them were willingly merged into each other. They waited until everyone in the house fell asleep and everywhere becomes silent. In the view of Neil if a female engages in sex, she starts falling in her nature whereas a male starts rising as he clarifies, "Brenda falling, slowly but with a smile, and me rising"(39). Both the lovers made love with their mutual understanding. Next day when Neil reaches home he couldn't resist dialling Brenda's number and they makes virtual love over telephone which can be seen in their conversation, when Brenda says "I'm in bed with you" to which Neil replies "That's right, and I am with you"(GC 40). Neil named it as game that they plays in their imagination, "Brenda was still in bed and so could play our game with some success, but I had to pull down all the shades imagine myself beside her" (GC 40). Both the lovers develop their intimacy through physical and virtual love. The attitude of good relationship starts at home but both the protagonist in the novella are failed to express this. In one hand where Brenda is jealous of her mother, on the other Neil feels more comfortable living with his aunt and uncle than his own parents who lives alone in Tuscan. When Brenda asked him about why doesn't he lives with his parents he replies, "I'm not a child any more, Brenda,' I (Neil) said, more sharply than I'd intended. I (Neil) just can't go wherever my parents are" (43). When this statement of Neil is viewed from psychological point of view he conveys a message that a child when grows young need not necessarily required to live with his parents. Brenda couldn't understand this remark of Neil and she further asks, "But then why do you stay with your aunt and uncle?" (43). Brenda again misinterprets him and extracts different meanings from the words of Neil. Neil on the other hand feels himself puzzled on

finding himself unable to convince Brenda and he tries different statements to make her understand his insight and views, "They're not my parents. They're better"(43). The original insight of Neil is clearly revealed now that he doesn't love his parents. He is not able to establish a fruitful relationship at the early stage in his family, which is going to bring a catastrophic repercussion in Neil's love life too.

To establish a long lasting and loving relationship it's very important for each partner to know about each other's interest in occupation and about family as well as social relations. Neil is as already in Patimkin's house, he is well versed about all family members of Brenda as well as interests and attitude of Brenda but Brenda is yet to know all this about Neil. In spite of asking these questions directly she refers her mother, "My mother asked me" (GC 43), but she later confesses him that, "It's not for my mother. I want to know. I wondered why you weren't with your parents, that's all" (43). The love for profession is not only an important element in one's life but his partner's life as well. This is the reason why Brenda is eager to know whether Neil likes his profession as a librarian. Neil, proves himself to be an ambivalent character in the novella as he is too puzzled to reply and impress Brenda, "It's okay, I sold shoes once and like the library better" (43). The giant question that arises here is that, Brenda, in spite of being from a well to do family, why trying to develop a better intimacy and why trying to know the deep insights of Neil? Is it because of blind love? or lust? Is she interested in maintaining this relationship as long lasting? On the other hand Neil too tries to impress her but his gesture and insight impatient struggle causing to reveal the secret and Brenda always feels him as being nasty to her. When Brenda asks Neil about how he got the job in the library, Neil irresistibly tries to explain but fails again, "I worked there for a little while when I was in college, then when I quit Uncle Aaron's, oh, I don't know..."(44). Derrida better proves to be the theorist of psychological deconstruction than deconstruction of meaning.



Neil does not stop expressing his frustration here only but when asked by Brenda “What did you take in college?”(44), he replies in an awkward and apathetically as “At Newark Colleges of Rutgers University I majored in Philosophy. I am twenty-three years old.” (44). Here Brenda again misinterprets his words and thus her psychology crashes again and she feels irritated and finds this relationship in a cocoon as she hesitantly asks, “Why do you sound nasty again?” (44). Neil responds innocently as “Do I?”(44), to which Brenda reacts in affirmative. Brenda is economically sound so she wants same life style even after marriage, if she is able to make any. As she is spending her time with Neil for developing a better relationship she reassures herself about the profession of her partner Neil as “Are you planning on making a career in library?” (44). Neil has never been bothered about his career rather he believes in physical pleasure and fantasy thus he replies to Brenda as, “Bren, I’m not planning anything. I haven’t planned a thing in three years” (44). Even after having being in relationship for days, engaging in sexual relations Brenda is not sure whether Neil really likes her and their relationship could go a long way so she reassures herself again and again, “Do you love me Neil?”(44). Neil feels himself well aware about Brenda that she loves the company of girls and once he has not thought about his career in last three years, how can he plan his love life? So he remains silent to this question of Brenda which puts Brenda into deep confusion and puzzle as she thinks that Neil is interested in only sexual pleasure so she gives him the offer for telling the truth as “I’ll sleep with you whether you do or not, so tell me the truth” (44). Here Neil confesses the truth of his fantasy of sexual pleasure and responds as “No” (44). The period, in which the novel was written and published in America, was the time of American dream. Americans were running behind money and sex and the same is represented by Roth in this novel. Roth best represents the social scenario through the characters of Neil and Brenda.

The most surprising thing appears in the novels when Neil makes a roundabout turn when he changes his remarks about whether he loves Brenda when she assures him, “When

you love me, there'll be nothing to worry about" (44) and he replies, "Then of course I'll love you" (44). Does Brenda trapping him in her love? If yes then why does so? Why Neil is so much ambivalent? Is he in search of American Dream? Does Neil feels that Brenda is from well to do family and marrying her will abolish his poorness? These questions are vital and mandatorily to be answered. Brenda's perspective about men is like this only that if they are trapped in love they speaks in their lovers voice as is the case in this novel when Neil is entangled in Brenda's love and confesses that he will love her then she expresses, "I know you will" (45). Neil every time is tensed about behaving well with Brenda in such a way that she shouldn't feel herself insulted by him and don't call him nasty so whenever he speaks his inner thoughts he adds "I'm not being nasty" (45). Neil has to keep Brenda's parents in happiness too so as to develop a family intimacy and stay at Brenda's home in presence of her parents, so he doesn't respond much vigorously on Mr. Patimkin's remarks about him that he eats like a bird (48). Neil Feels that it is the human nature that if someone has some presumptions about someone's habit, it will remain in his mind even after he amends them and thus Neil express his frustration against Mr Patimkin as, "I might have eaten ten times my normal amount, have finally killed myself with food, he would still have considered me not a man but a sparrow"(48). In spite of all these awkward confrontations Neil is eager to become a guest at Patimkin house for a week during his vacation which was granted by Mr Patimkin on Brenda's insistence. What is Neil intention behind living in Patimkin's house? Whether he is there just for making love to Brenda behind her parent's eyes or he is willing to understand and learn their family culture? These mysteries will be revealed in this research paper. Neil has got permission to stay in Patimkin's house by Mr Patimkin but Mrs Patimkin is not feeling her daughter safe while Neil is in her home as can be seen by Brenda's remarks, "I think she's nervous about your being here" (54). So she is not willing to stay in Neil's room for a long time to ease her mother's conscience.

In one hand where Neil is not having good relation with his parents on the other Brenda is struggling hard to patch up the arguments with her mother. She doesn't like the behaviour of her mother towards herself and Neil as well, she starts crying in the argument and yells, "Why the hell are you like this" (56). Brenda misses care and love of her mother but that doesn't mean that she should throw herself in the fire of Neil's lust. Neil as seems in this intimate relation just for the sake of lust and fantasy but Brenda should also be blamed for the advancement that she makes immaturity which can be clearly judged from Brenda's remarks, "Make love to me, Neil. Right now" (60). Although Neil is stunned to this remark of Brenda so does he asks, "Where?" (60), to which Brenda replies, "Do it! Here on this cruddy cruddy cruddy sofa" (60). Neil is although bounced with joy to this desire of Brenda but he controls his emotions and says, "And I obeyed her" (60). Neil is trying to ensure that whatever is happening between them is all because of the will and wish of Brenda. When Neil's one week stay at Patinkin's house was going to be over he was given a bonus of another week until Brenda's brother Ron's marriage by Brenda herself which she has somehow managed by agreement to her parents. Neil could have been overjoyed to this message but rather he become disturbed because of the fear of ending relationship with Brenda. There doesn't seem to be the place of trust in their relationship causing fear of breaking the intimacy. His fear can be easily seen when he thinks about his separation from Brenda:

I was not joyful but disturbed, as I had been more and more with the thought that when Brenda went back to Radcliffe, that would be end for me.....Nevertheless, I tossed my clothing back into the drawer and was able, finally to tell myself that there'd been no hints of ending our affair from Brenda, and any suspicions I had, any uneasiness, was spawned in my own uncertain heart. (65)

Neil assumes that Brenda's distancing will cause termination of their relationship. He thinks that he is in this relationship just for the sake of sexual enjoyment and expresses no

heartily affair. Although they are in physical relationship many a times but never talk about marriage and long lasting relationship. Neil is well aware about this fact, “Brenda and I had never mentioned marriage, except perhaps for that night at the pool when she said, ‘When you love me, everything will be all right’” (67). However Brenda too has never expressed about marriage but her remark of ‘everything will be all right’ creates deconstruction of Neil’s psychology of what does mean by ‘everything’? He ponders again and again over their love and relationship to each other but ultimately he realized that things are not well, “Well, I loved her, and she me, and things didn’t seem all right at all” (67). These oceanic thoughts of Neil causes him to think over the matter of marriage, “...I wanted Brenda to marry me” (67), but he couldn’t dare to propose her, “The proposal would have taken a kind of courage that I did not think I had” (68). An awkward situation appears when in one hand he doesn’t dare to propose Brenda for marriage on the contrary he got the huge courage of asking Brenda to wear a diaphragm which proves to be great concern for the deterioration of their intimacy, “... I want you to buy a diaphragm. To go to doctor and get one” (68). This clearly indicates that he has a great sense of saving his image if Brenda gets pregnant in their sexual relation but has no courage of proposing Brenda for marriage. On receiving the reply of Brenda that, “Don’t worry, sweetie, we’re careful” (68), Neil becomes ambivalent and completely confused about how to make Brenda convinced about explaining the reason for wearing the diaphragm. At first he explains that, “But that’s the safest” (68) but later changes his statement and says:

“Brenda, I want you to own one for... for the sake of pleasure”

“Pleasure? Whose? The doctor’s?”

“‘Mine’, I said”. (68)

Here Neil proves to be a patriarchal as he orders Brenda to follow her command because she is not visualizing the insights of Neil. The perspectives of both the partners are contradictory to each other. Where Neil wants Brenda to wear a diaphragm but she is not in the

agreement. This is the point in the novel where their deterioration of intimacy is started. In the words of DeVito this is the fourth stage in the relationship where they come to know the ground reality of each other and their relationship starts deteriorating. This is the place where both should try to repair their relationship lest it will end in dissolution. There has been a lot of argument over getting the diaphragm between Brenda and Neil, both reproaches each other and instead of repairing this intimacy they both blame each other. Moreover Brenda seems to identify the real nature of Neil and breaks the relationship here itself, "I didn't think you were such a creature of flesh" (69). Neil who used to fear a lot of how will he survive without Brenda is now a completely different man, instead of pacifying Brenda, he starts behaving in a patriarchal manner and shows his control over her body and who used to follow each and every instruction of her is now ordering to buy a diaphragm, "I'm bothering because I want you to go to a doctor and get a diaphragm. That's all. No Explanation. Just do it. Do it because I asked you to" (70). Earlier Neil gave different reasons for buying the diaphragm like safety and his pleasure but ultimately he proves he wants her to wear the diaphragm to prove his masculinity and patriarchal power. On the other hand Brenda has only one and clear reason for not buying and wearing the diaphragm, "I just don't feel old enough for all that equipment" (70). Can one imagine that after so much of misbehaviour and abuses to each other like "Goddamit, Brenda" to which she retaliates "Goddamit yourself" (70), this relationship is going to be repaired and sustained. And if at all it is being repaired, who will first take the initiative and why?

After the hot argument between them they didn't speak to each other but it is Neil again who takes the initiative to talk to Brenda, "Brenda, please come here" (70). When Brenda explains that wearing of diaphragm is a conscious act and wishes to remain an unconscious child. In fact there is a social constraint too in the mind of Brenda and that is what will she ask the doctor, "Neil, how do you think I'd feel lying to some doctor?"

(71). When Neil was explaining the contradictory reasons for buying the diaphragm, Brenda was neutral but opposite to it now when Brenda is expressing her inability to fetch the diaphragm, Neil is unable to control his anger and calls her bitch, “Oh Brenda, you are a selfish egotistical bitch!” (71). Not only this but he also blames her that these all things she is doing for ending this relationship. The fact is exactly contrary which Brenda clearly expresses:

That’s right, I’m a bitch. I want to end. That’s why I ask you to stay another week, that’s why I let you sleep with me in my own house. What’s the matter with you! Why don’t you and my mother take turns- one day she can plague me and next you- (71)

This assumption of Brenda is going to be accurate at the end of the novel when Brenda’s diaphragm was discovered by her mother in the drawer and she was bitterly scolded by her mother while Neil too blames her for the same and breaks the relationship and this diaphragm becomes the icon of deteriorated relationship. What a girl will do after being called a bitch? Probably she will completely break such relationship but opposite to it something awkwardly happens the next morning which Neel explained as “Brenda greeted me with a perfectly pleasant smile and in the dining room, where I walked to look out at the back lawn and weather; she kissed me on the shoulder” (73). This awkward incident makes Neil stunned as Neil has never thought of such reaction from Brenda. In one hand Neil lefts no stones unturned to spoil the relationship with Brenda contrary to this Brenda is making all efforts to save this relationship. Although she is not willing to go to a doctor and buy the diaphragm, even though she rings Margaret Sanger clinic where she is asked about, whether she was married? (83). Brenda while conversing on the phone with the women in the clinic, feels the disciplines of her mother, “God, the women sounded like my mother...” (83). The fear of her mother’s terror is clearly shown by Roth here when is

talking over telephone to clinic's women for getting the diaphragm, but she hangs up without getting any surety about getting the diaphragm. When Neil suggests her to call the clinic again she expresses her inability and also expresses her ignorance and puzzle of calling in the clinic initially, "No, I can't. I don't even know why I called in the first place" (83). It shows that whatever Brenda is doing is for developing a better intimacy with Neil although she is from high economical class in comparison to Neil. Every time she is trying to repair the cracked relationship. In spite of knowing that Neil is pleading for the diaphragm again and again just for the sake of his lust, she agreed to go to doctor with him. Ultimately she wears the diaphragm and spent the night together. Where everyone in her house is busy in the marriage of her brother Ron, she is busy with Neil, spending nights together.

Brenda when departs for her school to Boston, Neil calls and asks her to come to meet him but she expresses her inability as she has a test in the college. Her spark of being in intimacy is deteriorated and she gives priority to her exam in place of her lover. She also tests the trust of dedication of love to Neil as she conversely asks, "Can't you come up here?" (105). To this invitation Neil first doesn't shows any interest in meeting her by getting leave from his job and replies, "I'm working" (105), but later after making several excuses, Neil's lust, overrides his emotions. Thus Brenda's emotional blackmail and temptation, makes Neil agree to visit her for two days. They stayed at a hotel where Neil booked in their name as "Mr and Mrs Klugman" (108), this is the first and last instance in the novella where Neil regards Brenda as her better half although momentarily only. Neil clearly expresses his lustful intention of meeting Brenda:

I came up behind her and put my hands around her body and held her breasts, and when I felt the cool draught that swept under the sill, I realized how long it had been since the first warm night when I had put my arms around her and felt the



tiny wings beating in her back. And then I realized Why I'd really come to Boston- It had been long enough. (108)

Neil feels that Brenda is a bit uncomfortable, on enquiring she reveals that the diaphragm that she had left at home is discovered by her mother and she reproached her badly. She hands over the letter sent by her mother to Neil which is about the discovery of the diaphragm. Neil when reads that letter he finds Mrs Patimkin frustrated and distraught on the act of her daughter and reads her words as, "I never thought this would happen to a daughter of mine" (111). On being aware of the discovery of diaphragm, Neil makes hard arguments to Brenda, "Why did you left you at home?"(113), although she is already frustrated of the same matter. The relationship, which foundation is built on lust and physical pleasure finally comes to an end and Neil becomes too much frustrated of the arguments that they makes, "Brenda this is the most frustrating argument of my life!" (114). The intimacy dissolute when Brenda says, "Neil, be realistic. After this, can I bring you home? Can you see us all sitting around the table? (116). Neil is also well aware that he can't face her parents, so replies, "I can't, If you can't, and I can if you can" (116). Brenda reminds him of the acquisitions imposed upon her by Neil from the beginning of their relationship.

Neil, what are you talking about! You're the one who doesn't understand. You're the one who from the very beginning was accusing me of things? Remember? Isn't it so? Why don't you have your eyes fixed? Why don't you have this fixed, that fixed? As if it were my fault that I could have them fixed. You kept acting as if I was going to run away from you every minute.(116-117)

After this hot argument and termination of the relationship Neil packs his bag and departs, away from Brenda, away from Boston forever. He realizes the pain of the broken

relationship, “I wanted to be alone, in the dark; not because I wanted to think about anything, but rather because, for just a while, I wanted to think about nothing” (117). He expresses his deconstruction through his emptiness of insight, “I looked, but the outside of me gave up little information about the inside of me” (117). This is the time when Neil realized his pursuit of Brenda and also about his confusion of loving Brenda whole heartedly or in shallow:

What was inside me that had turned pursuit and clutching into love, and then turned it inside out again? What was it that had turned winning into losing, and losing- who knows- into winning? I was sure I had loved Brenda, though standing there, I knew I couldn't any longer. (117)

## Conclusion

It can be concluded that relationship implies first some sort of intermittent interaction between two people involving interchanges over an extended period of time. The interchanges have some degree of mutuality, depending upon the behaviour of the other. Man's relationship with woman is eternal. In the psychological makeup of the human being, man as well as woman is a part. The principle of male, female vibrations is there everywhere in Nature. Both of them need each other to achieve their physical as well as psychological completeness. But, of course, they are known for their gender roles which are based on norms or standards, created by the society. Manly jobs are generally connected with quality, hostility, and strength, while ladylike jobs are normally connected with latency, sustaining and subordination. Sexual orientation socialization begins during childbirth and happens through four noteworthy operators of socialization – family, instruction, peer gatherings, and broad communications. Repeated socialization over time leads men and women into a false sense that they are acting naturally rather than following a socially constructed role. This is found especially in woman as she

accepts her status passively thinking of it as her natural status. But, when she fails to fulfil her socially constructed role, gender issues emerge and they lead to problems in the relationship between man and woman. Derrida's remark is found to be correct that meaning of text differs and defers and he proves to be a better theorist of psychological deconstruction.

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